

God Hasn't Given Up On Me, Part 2 - Romans 11:11-15 – October 21st, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled; "God Hasn't Given Up On Me."
- Up to this point, the Apostle Paul has been arguing his case concerning the Jews and their false belief that God was through with them.
- The reason for this is, they thought the Gentiles had somehow replaced them, such that they actually believed God had given up on them.
- The fact of the matter is, not only had God not rejected Israel, rather, it was that Israel had rejected God, so much so, they'd become hard.
- The good news is that in spite of their rejecting of God, and their hardening of their hearts towards God, He had not given up on the Jews.
- It's for this reason we can be of good courage; have much hope. God hasn't given up on the Jew nor has He given up on me, and you, too.
- By way of introduction, I'm deeming it necessary to quickly go through what we have seen thus far, as it's germane to our understanding.
- 1. In spite of how bad I've been (Verse 1)**
 - In spite of the fact Paul persecuted Christians, many of whom were killed as martyrs because of their profession of faith he wasn't rejected.
- 2. Regardless of who's against me (Verses 2-4)**
 - In spite of Elijah's prayer in stopping the rain from coming down, he couldn't pray against Israel stopping God's blessing from coming down.
- 3. Even if I've rejected Him (Verses 5-10)**
 - In spite of the hardening of the Jews hearts and the blindness of their eyes in rejecting their true Messiah, God does not in turn reject them.
- 4. Even if I think God rejected me (Verses 11-15)**
 - (11) Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. (12) But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! (13) I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry (14) in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. (15) For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?
 - v11 Paul says their fall isn't beyond recovery rather it's because of their transgression salvation came to the Gentiles making Israel envious.
 - v12-13 As the apostle to the Gentiles he says their transgression means riches and loss for the world and Gentiles bringing greater fullness.
 - v14-15 He hopes to arouse his own people to envy to save some, for if their rejection reconciles the world, acceptance is life from the dead.
 - What Paul is saying here is that in spite of how stumbled the Jews were by the Gentiles, they still hadn't fallen beyond their own recovery.
 - In other words, God still had a "recovery plan" if you will, by which He would restore them unto Himself, in that He uses the Gentiles to do it.
 - Paul is saying that there's coming a day when that last Gentile is going to get saved bringing their fullness. This comes back up in verse 25.
 - Be that as it may, I think it wise we focus in more on the "how" God will do this by virtue of it's application to us in our Christian lives today.
 - Here's what I'm thinking, how God will actually do this is that He will use a sanctified envy, as it were, to make Israel jealous of the Gentiles.
 - It's important to understand how that the Jews had erroneously thought God had rejected them vis-à-vis His grafting in of these Gentiles.
 - Now, here's the application of this to our own lives, often times, we are prone to think that God will favor other believers over us.
 - This then leads to the false notion that somehow God, in accepting them, has in fact, rejected us. Nothing could be further from the truth.
 - By way of illustration, one of my children will sometimes think that I'm favoring their sibling over them when in fact I'm drawing them back.
 - Here's a question, and please know I ask it of myself as well, have you ever felt as though God was favoring another Christian over you?
 - Let me ask the same thing a different way, does it ever seem as if you have fallen out of favor in God's eyes, when He blesses another?
 - I would suggest we're all prone to become envious of another Christian for whom it seems God is blessing richly, while we suffer miserably.
 - If that weren't bad enough, we've got the demonic attack in the spiritual realm planting seeds of doubt about whether or not God loves me.
 - The enemy will deceive and we will believe that not only is God through with me; given up on me, He's replaced me by blessing another.
 - Sadly you can write the next chapter in this book because it's textbook in that you will distance yourself from God thinking He's mad at you.
 - Then, to make matters worse, not only is there a hardening towards the Lord, there's also a deadening in ones relationship with the Lord.
 - Thus, that joy of the Lord, has long since given way to this drudgery in the Lord, and it comes packaged with resentment towards the Lord.
 - I realize how that I'm painting a very bleak picture here, however, I would venture to say that this may describe some in this church today.
 - If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the dirty little secrets within the body of Christ today, I would have to respond with this.
 - Namely, there are struggling Christian's who are stumbling because God is blessing fellow Christians, and they don't want anyone to know.
 - Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I share with you a personal testimony about how my bride and I went through this very thing.
 - We tried for ten years before the Lord gave us children. We were unable to get pregnant and when we did, our babies died in the womb.
 - During those ten years of infertility, we lost one in a miscarriage and two with ectopic pregnancies. For us to have three children is miracle.
 - We even tried to adopt a baby girl who was born to a 15 year old birth mother who selected us to be the adoptive parents of her baby girl.
 - Our, would be adopted daughter, was born on June 1st, 1997. We were present at the delivery video taping the birth we even named her.
 - However, the birth mother in taking her home chose to keep her baby. We had resigned ourselves to the reality of never having children.
 - During this time our close friends were having no problem having many children. I'd be disingenuous were I to tell you we weren't envious.

- In June of 1997, after the adoption fell through, the Lord spoke through His Word that what He did for Abraham and Sarah, He'd do for us.
- Just as He had appeared to Abraham promising him a son exactly one year to the day, so too would we have a son one year to the day.
- Well, God did exactly that. One year to the day, on June 2nd, 1998, our now fourteen-year-old firstborn son, Elias Samuel Farag, was born.
- Interestingly Elias' birth coincided with my mother's death, May 24th, 1995 and my father's death nine months earlier, August 14th of 1994.
- While I held my dying mother in my arms, I cried out to God for a son, because I was about to no longer have parents, nor was I a parent.
- To say that I was envious of my brothers in Christ, who not only were parents but also had both their parents, would be an understatement.
- But God would have Elias conceived on August 14th, the date of my dad's death making his due date May 24th the date of my mom's death.
- However, Elias was post due so his birth was nine days later on June 2nd, which was exactly one year to the day just as God had promised.
- By the way, it was at this time I made a vow to God that in taking my parents and giving me a son, I would serve him all the days of my life.
- Fast forward to the year 2000, and after losing another baby in an ectopic pregnancy, and almost losing my wife because of it, we had Levi.
- Biologically, and logically, Levi, who's now twelve years of age, was even more of a miracle than was Elias, after an ectopic pregnancy.
- On December 7th, 2003 we moved to Hawaii to start this wonderful church only to learn, we were once again pregnant in March of 2005.
- In the ninth month of the pregnancy, November 2005, we were given the devastating diagnosis that our daughter Noelle had Trisomy 18.
- In creating our birth plan, we also knew we had to create a funeral plan. According to the physicians, Noelle was "incompatible with life."
- I have to confess that I truly thought this would be how it ends for us. I'd succumbed to this notion that somehow God was punishing me.
- It surely didn't help that everyone around me had healthy children, and thriving churches. Once again I found myself envious of others.
- Well, our daughter Noelle would end up dying in our arms, and go home to be with the Lord after four months and six days, May 4th 2006.
- But God! But God, forty-five days later would miraculously enable us to conceive in what became our seventh pregnancy in June of 2006.
- On March 19th, 2007, our daughter Sabia, now five years old, was born, and I suppose it goes without saying, she is the apple of our eye.
- In spite of all the pain in thinking that somehow God had rejected me, given up on me, and was through with me, God still did this for me.
- It would seem as though God in and through this supposed rejection brought about a glorious acceptance by bringing about life from death.
- In closing, I want to draw your attention to what Paul says in verse fifteen, for it ever so magnificently sums up all that I've shared with you.
- Paul writes in Romans 11:15, "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"
- I can testify to you that God hasn't given up on you, even if you think he's rejected you. He will bring new life to that which has been dead.